

by more than 10 per centum or \$500, whichever is greater, until it provides the Secretary with an explanation of the need for the additional expenditure and the Secretary approves such additional expenditure.

(Pub. L. 95-113, title XVIII, §1805, Sept. 29, 1977, 91 Stat. 1042; Pub. L. 97-98, title XI, §1116(a), Dec. 22, 1981, 95 Stat. 1271.)

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1981 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 97-98 effective Dec. 22, 1981, see section 1801 of Pub. L. 97-98, set out as an Effective Date note under section 4301 of this title.

#### AMENDMENTS

1981—Pub. L. 97-98 substituted provision relating to budget prohibitions for provision relating to membership on advisory committees. See section 2283 of this title.

#### SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 2286 of this title.

### § 2286. Termination of committees

The Secretary shall terminate any advisory committee upon a finding that any such advisory committee—

- (1) has expended funds in excess of its estimated annual operating costs by more than 10 per centum or \$500, whichever is greater, without the prior approval of the Secretary pursuant to the provisions of section 2285 of this title;
- (2) has failed to file all reports required under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act or this chapter;
- (3) has failed to meet for two consecutive years;
- (4) is responsible for functions that otherwise would be or should be performed by Federal employees; or
- (5) does not serve or has ceased to serve an essential public function.

(Pub. L. 95-113, title XVIII, §1806, Sept. 29, 1977, 91 Stat. 1042; Pub. L. 97-98, title XI, §1116(a), Dec. 22, 1981, 95 Stat. 1271.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Federal Advisory Committee Act, referred to in par. (2), is Pub. L. 92-463, Oct. 6, 1972, 86 Stat. 770, as amended, which is set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

#### AMENDMENTS

1981—Pub. L. 97-98 substituted provision relating to termination of advisory committees for provision relating to advisory committee charter requirements.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1981 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 97-98 effective Dec. 22, 1981, see section 1801 of Pub. L. 97-98, set out as an Effective Date note under section 4301 of this title.

### §§ 2287 to 2289. Omitted

Sections 2287 to 2289 of this title were omitted in the general amendment of this chapter by Pub. L. 97-98, title XI, §1116(a), Dec. 22, 1981, 95 Stat. 1270.

Section 2287, Pub. L. 95-113, title XVIII, §1807, Sept. 29, 1977, 91 Stat. 1043, related to transmission of an annual report. See section 2284 of this title.

Section 2288, Pub. L. 95-113, title XVIII, §1808, Sept. 29, 1977, 91 Stat. 1044, related to budget prohibitions. See section 2285 of this title.

Section 2289, Pub. L. 95-113, title XVIII, §1809, Sept. 29, 1977, 91 Stat. 1044, related to termination of advisory committees. See section 2286 of this title.

## CHAPTER 56—UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES AFFECTING PRODUCERS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

#### Sec.

- 2301. Congressional findings and declaration of policy.
- 2302. Definitions.
- 2303. Prohibited practices.
- 2304. Disclaimer of intention to prohibit normal dealing.
- 2305. Enforcement provisions.
  - (a) Civil actions by persons aggrieved; preventive relief; attorneys' fees; security.
  - (b) Civil actions by Attorney General; Federal jurisdiction; complaint; preventive relief.
  - (c) Suits by persons injured; Federal jurisdiction; amount of recovery; attorneys' fees; limitation of actions.
  - (d) Federal jurisdiction; exhaustion of other remedies; State laws and jurisdiction unaffected.
- 2306. Separability.

### § 2301. Congressional findings and declaration of policy

Agricultural products are produced in the United States by many individual farmers and ranchers scattered throughout the various States of the Nation. Such products in fresh or processed form move in large part in the channels of interstate and foreign commerce, and such products which do not move in these channels directly burden or affect interstate commerce. The efficient production and marketing of agricultural products by farmers and ranchers is of vital concern to their welfare and to the general economy of the Nation. Because agricultural products are produced by numerous individual farmers, the marketing and bargaining position of individual farmers will be adversely affected unless they are free to join together voluntarily in cooperative organizations as authorized by law. Interference with this right is contrary to the public interest and adversely affects the free and orderly flow of goods in interstate and foreign commerce.

It is, therefore, declared to be the policy of Congress and the purpose of this chapter to establish standards of fair practices required of handlers in their dealings in agricultural products.

(Pub. L. 90-288, §2, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 93.)

#### SHORT TITLE

Section 1 of Pub. L. 90-288 provided that: "This Act [enacting this chapter] shall be known as the 'Agricultural Fair Practices Act of 1967'."

### § 2302. Definitions

When used in this chapter—

- (a) The term "handler" means any person engaged in the business or practice of (1) acquiring agricultural products from producers or associations of producers for processing or sale; or (2) grading, packaging, handling, storing, or processing agricultural products received from pro-

ducers or associations of producers; or (3) contracting or negotiating contracts or other arrangements, written or oral, with or on behalf of producers or associations of producers with respect to the production or marketing of any agricultural product; or (4) acting as an agent or broker for a handler in the performance of any function or act specified in clause (1), (2), or (3) of this paragraph.

(b) The term “producer” means a person engaged in the production of agricultural products as a farmer, planter, rancher, dairyman, fruit, vegetable, or nut grower.

(c) The term “association of producers” means any association of producers of agricultural products engaged in marketing, bargaining, shipping, or processing as defined in section 1141j(a) of title 12, or in section 291 of this title.

(d) The term “person” includes individuals, partnerships, corporations, and associations.

(e) The term “agricultural products” shall not include cotton or tobacco or their products.

(Pub. L. 90-288, §3, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 94.)

### § 2303. Prohibited practices

It shall be unlawful for any handler knowingly to engage or permit any employee or agent to engage in the following practices:

(a) To coerce any producer in the exercise of his right to join and belong to or to refrain from joining or belonging to an association of producers, or to refuse to deal with any producer because of the exercise of his right to join and belong to such an association; or

(b) To discriminate against any producer with respect to price, quantity, quality, or other terms of purchase, acquisition, or other handling of agricultural products because of his membership in or contract with an association of producers; or

(c) To coerce or intimidate any producer to enter into, maintain, breach, cancel, or terminate a membership agreement or marketing contract with an association of producers or a contract with a handler; or

(d) To pay or loan money, give any thing of value, or offer any other inducement or reward to a producer for refusing to or ceasing to belong to an association of producers; or

(e) To make false reports about the finances, management, or activities of associations of producers or handlers; or

(f) To conspire, combine, agree, or arrange with any other person to do, or aid or abet the doing of, any act made unlawful by this chapter.

(Pub. L. 90-288, §4, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 94.)

#### SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 2305 of this title.

### § 2304. Disclaimer of intention to prohibit normal dealing

Nothing in this chapter shall prevent handlers and producers from selecting their customers and suppliers for any reason other than a producer's membership in or contract with an association of producers, nor require a handler to deal with an association of producers.

(Pub. L. 90-288, §5, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 95.)

### § 2305. Enforcement provisions

#### (a) Civil actions by persons aggrieved; preventive relief; attorneys' fees; security

Whenever any handler has engaged or there are reasonable grounds to believe that any handler is about to engage in any act or practice prohibited by section 2303 of this title, a civil action for preventive relief, including an application for a permanent or temporary injunction, restraining order, or other order, may be instituted by the person aggrieved. In any action commenced pursuant hereto, the court, in its discretion, may allow the prevailing party a reasonable attorney's fee as part of the costs. The court may provide that no restraining order or preliminary injunction shall issue except upon the giving of security by the applicant, in such sum as the court deems proper, for the payment of such costs and damages as may be incurred or suffered by any party who is found to have been wrongfully enjoined or restrained.

#### (b) Civil actions by Attorney General; Federal jurisdiction; complaint; preventive relief

Whenever the Secretary of Agriculture has reasonable cause to believe that any handler, or group of handlers, has engaged in any act or practice prohibited by section 2303 of this title, he may request the Attorney General to bring civil action in his behalf in the appropriate district court of the United States by filing with it a complaint (1) setting forth facts pertaining to such act or practice, and (2) requesting such preventive relief, including an application for a permanent or temporary injunction, restraining order, or other order against the handler, or handlers, responsible for such acts or practices. Upon receipt of such request, the Attorney General is authorized to file such complaint.

#### (c) Suits by persons injured; Federal jurisdiction; amount of recovery; attorneys' fees; limitation of actions

Any person injured in his business or property by reason of any violation of, or combination or conspiracy to violate, any provision of section 2303 of this title may sue therefor in the appropriate district court of the United States without respect to the amount in controversy, and shall recover damages sustained. In any action commenced pursuant to this subsection, the court may allow the prevailing party a reasonable attorney's fee as a part of the costs. Any action to enforce any cause of action under this subsection shall be forever barred unless commenced within two years after the cause of action accrued.

#### (d) Federal jurisdiction; exhaustion of other remedies; State laws and jurisdiction unaffected

The district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction of proceedings instituted pursuant to this section and shall exercise the same without regard to whether the aggrieved party shall have exhausted any administrative or other remedies that may be provided by law.

The provisions of this chapter shall not be construed to change or modify existing State law nor to deprive the proper State courts of jurisdiction.

(Pub. L. 90-288, §6, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 95.)

**§ 2306. Separability**

If any provision of this chapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the validity of the remainder of the chapter and of the application of such provision to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

(Pub. L. 90-288, § 7, Apr. 16, 1968, 82 Stat. 95.)

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This chapter is referred to in sections 1562, 1611 of this title; title 15 section 3703; title 35 section 201; title 42 section 12002.